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FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0192
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAO/AMCONSUL CURACAO PRIORITY 1264
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0193

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 000221

SIPDIS

WHA/CCA FOR DAVID MCFARLAND, WHA/CAR FOR JACKIE ROSHOLT,
WHA/PDA FOR CHAD WEST

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/23/2018

TAGS: ETRD ETTC PREL CU NS

SUBJECT: CUBA COUNTRY REVIEW FOR TITLE III SUSPENSION OF
LIBERTAD ACT: RESPONSE FROM SURINAME

REF: SECSTATE 52541

Classified By: Pol/Econ Section Chief Geneve Menscher for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) Response is keyed to paragraph 5 in reftel:

¶2. (C) Post is unaware of any host country investment in Cuba.

¶3. (C) Post is similarly unaware of any bi-lateral trade agreements with Cuba.

¶4. (C) "Operation Miracle," Cuba's "health diplomacy" program of free cataract eye surgeries, is very active and popular in Suriname. Several thousand Surinamers have traveled to Cuba for this surgery. The program is also enthusiastically publicized by Suriname's Minister of Health, who received his medical training in Cuba. The Minister also has a Cuban wife. He praised Fidel Castro publicly after the late February 2008 announcement that Castro would step down. An unknown number of Surinamers study in Cuba. Cuban doctors also work in Suriname.

¶5. (C) Suriname has not worked directly to promote the advancement of democracy and human rights in Cuba. However, after the late February 2008 decision of Fidel Castro to give up the Presidency, Vice President Ramdien Sardjoe told reporters, "we are all interested... to see that we get a leadership which answers to the aspirations of the Cuban people." For the most part, however, Surinamers view Cuba as a benefactor, and the Government of Suriname (GOS) interacts matter-of-factly with the Government of Cuba domestically. There have been numerous public statements and media coverage on the benefits of Cuban assistance ("Operation Miracle" energy efficient light bulbs, and education) that included GOS comment.

¶6. (C) In the last six months Minister of Education Edwin Wolf visited Cuba.

SCHREIBER HUGHES